

Watchwords by Officer Tom Hanshaw
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It seems that everywhere you turn today, you bump into a number. From the time the alarm clock rings in the morning until the end of the eleven o'clock news, our lives are revolving around numbers. Some are posted, such as the speed limit signs on your way to work, while others are consistent, like the price of a cup of coffee in the morning. Many numbers are well known, such as using 911 in an emergency while others fluctuate like the posted price of a gallon of gas. We worry about numbers when juggling bills or shoveling snow but there may be one number you don't really think much about.

Is the number of your home clearly posted on the front of your house? Would emergency personnel be able to find your house quickly in an emergency? If you live in a multi-family building, are the units clearly marked? These are a few questions every resident should take a moment to ponder and take steps to correct if the answer is "no." In an emergency, time can be the difference between life and death. An emergency can be chaotic and often there's not any time to spare, so it's crucial help reaches you quickly. During the course of patrol shifts recently, I have noticed, as well as other officers, a number of homes around the city are poorly marked. It's very frustrating for firefighters, paramedics and police officers to waste time searching for the correct home in an emergency. The problem is even greater when several homes on the street are not marked.

House numbers should be clearly visible from the street and contrast with the color of your home. A bold number, about four inches in size, works very well when your home is somewhat close to the road. The City Ordinance suggests nothing less than two inches but honestly two-inch numbers are too small. If your home is situated a distance from the street, post a number at the street, either on a post or the mailbox. Take a few moments to approach your residence from different directions to assure the number is visible all around. Never be more concerned about cosmetics than usefulness when it comes to house numbers.

I have spoken with the staff at Amesbury Industrial Supply on High Street and Eastern Lumber on Haverhill Road, Route 110, and both businesses are well stocked to handle "your numbering needs." Assuring your house is properly marked will only take a few moments and with a minimal cost; think of it as a way to get a jumpstart on the outdoor spring projects' list. Be sure to mention this article to employees and they will be glad to help you find the winning number.

It's still about three and a half months away but planning is well underway for the Class of 2011 Grad Night event. Following the ceremony on June 3rd, seniors will be bused to secret locations for a fun-filled, supervised and substance-free night of celebration. Now in its twelfth year, the non-profit AHS Grad Night Committee is comprised of parents, alumni, teachers and community members who work throughout the year to make the celebration possible. As a law enforcement officer for nearly twenty-eight years, I have seen too many tragedies around the post-graduation season. The Grad

Night Opportunity helps graduates stay safe on one of the most potentially dangerous nights of their young adult lives.

In order to make the program possible and free for seniors, volunteers host a number of fundraisers. Previous classes have been treated to a Boston Harbor Cruise, Comedy Show, indoor carnival, music, dancing and of course food. I was actually able to chaperone last year's event, which featured a cruise on Lake Winnepesaukee. The entire program costs thousands of dollars so donations are needed are greatly appreciated. Donations can be sent to the AHS Grad Night Committee, PO Box 57, Amesbury or dropped off at the High School. Nearly every student in last year's class took part in the program and organizers are expecting a large attendance this year too.